

REMARKS

Claims 1-16 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, independent claim 1 and dependent claim 5 are amended to overcome the rejections of these claims and to place them in condition for allowance. Claims 13 and 14 have been amended to remove means plus function language. Claim 16 is added.

I. Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §112

In the Office Action, claims 1-15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112 due to lack of enabling disclosure and indefiniteness. Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections for the reasons described below.

Applicants thank the Examiner for providing draft claim language in the Office Action for claims 1 and 5 that if adopted would place the claims in condition for allowance.

With respect to the indefiniteness rejection, Applicants have amended independent claim 1 to overcome this rejection. Claim 5 has been amended as suggested in the Office Action. Claim 1 has been amended to substantially adopt the claim language suggested in the Office Action, although some changes have been made according to Applicants' preference.

Applicants note that claim 1 has been amended to indicate that the voltage generates electrostatic forces "which cause a deformation of said droplets of respective first and second reagents, before they come into contact and mix." The mixing of the two droplets is achieved not only by the injector but also by electrostatic forces generated by the voltage applied between the two electrodes. The electrostatic forces cause the droplets to be deformed until the droplets come into contact and mix together. For example, in the embodiment of the claimed invention shown in Fig. 7, where the distance d is smaller or equal to the mean diameter of the second droplet, the droplets come into contact when the second droplet is still attached to the injector. In the embodiment of the claimed invention shown in Fig. 8, where the distance d is greater than the mean diameter of the second droplet, the droplet is detached

from the injector and falls freely into the viscous liquid before coming into contact with the first droplet. The electrostatic forces in these embodiments enable the two droplets to be deformed in order to prevent the occurrence of a dimple, which is prejudicial for the coalescence phenomenon.

With respect to the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §112 for lack of enabling disclosure, Applicant respectfully submits that claim language in amended claim 1 overcomes this rejection of the claims. As previously noted, the invention recited in amended claim 1 achieves mixing not only by the spatial relationship of the droplets but also by the electrostatic forces generated by the voltage applied between the two electrodes.

Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejections is respectfully requested.

II. New Method Claim

Applicant has added new claim 16, which provides a method claim for the recited invention. This claim corresponds to device claim 1, and is also believed to be allowable.

III. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1 - 16 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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Amendments to the Drawings:

The attached formal drawings replace the originally filed informal drawings.

Attachment: Formal Drawings